April 8, 2003

Notice of Final Determination
Loomis NRCA Management Plan
SEPA File No. 03-012201

The Department of Natural Resources issued a [X] Determination of Non-significance (DNS), [ ] Mitigated Determination of Non-significance (MDNS), [ ] Modified DNS/MDNS on January 22,2003 for this proposal under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and WAC 197-11-340(2).

This threshold determination is hereby:

[ ] Retained.

[X] Modified. Modifications to this threshold determination include the following:

1. Fire rejuvenates lodgepole forests and is most frequent in the dry summer months. Most of the precipitation occurs in the winter months as snow. Past natural fire events created thousands of acres of even-aged lodgepole forests including the forests within the NRCA. As a result, acres of trees aged at the same time and became host trees to native bark beetles. The natural accumulation of woody material combined with hot, dry, windy weather create conditions for another fire cycle. Heat from the high intensity fire release seeds for the next generation of lodgepole pine. Current law mandates the suppression of all uncontrolled fires thus interruption of the fire cycle may occur as a result of fire suppression.

2. Quaking Aspen Forest

   Discussion

   Larvae of the satin moth (Leucoma salicis), an insect introduced into North America from Europe, attack various tree species in the genus Populus, including quaking aspen and black cottonwood. The caterpillars feed on the foliage of these species and can completely defoliate trees. Extensive and repeated defoliation can result in suppressed growth, top-kill, or tree mortality. Large infestations can kill significant portions of aspen or cottonwood stands.

Signs of this insect have not been observed in the Loomis NRCA, however it is known to occur in much of southern British Columbia as well as in portions of Washington State, including Okanogan County. Significant infestations have occurred in this area in recent years, resulting in mortality of entire aspen clones in some cases. Alternatives for control of satin moth currently include application of insecticide to the canopies of infected stands or introduction of biological control agents (parasitic wasps and flies).

Management Actions

- Inventory and map aspen stands and seral conditions.
- Maintain aspen component at its current approximate acreage or greater with a mix of seral conditions at landscape scale.
- Consider the use of prescribed fire or mechanical disturbance within aspen stands if necessary to maintain mixed seral conditions.
- If evidence of insect or disease activity such as satin moth is observed, consult with DNR Forest Health staff to determine the degree of threat posed and appropriate actions.
- Work with Coordinated Resource Management group to implement range management practices to deter livestock from grazing in aspen stands.

Add aspen stands to the Sensitive Areas Section in the Management Guidelines Chapter.

Aspen Stands – Aspen form colonies as new shoots sprout from a common system of roots. Conditions, such as overgrazing and fire suppression, may suppress aspen rejuvenation leading to an overall decline in aspen stands. Furthermore, aspen tend to grow in moist areas and the roots are vulnerable to compaction.

3. Management Actions (Gray wolf and Wolverine)

   Coordinate with Fish and Wildlife Service, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to determine trail closure dates, locations and other potential management actions.

4. Non-Native Animals

   Other than livestock, non-native turkeys are the only non-native animals sighted in the Loomis NRCA. Impacts from the presence of turkeys have not been documented.

5. Incompatible Uses

   Some types of use are not compatible with the goals of the Loomis NRCA. When done frequently or by enough visitors, these activities prevent DNR from successfully fulfilling its land management responsibilities outlined in the NRCA Act and the Settlement Agreement. Incompatible uses include any activities that DNR determines to be unsafe, destructive, disruptive or in conflict with the management goals of this plan. They include, but are not limited to:

   - Recreation with wheeled (motorized/non-motorized, e.g. mountain bikes) vehicles,
   - Removal or alteration of vegetation, soil, or rock, except as part of weed control, permitted livestock grazing, habitat restoration projects or tribal use.

6. Access

North Block
Access to the north block is limited to foot, horseback, and non-wheeled motorized vehicles. Wheeled vehicle access is limited to site management (including permit range management) and emergency vehicles. Visitors can reach the boundary of the north block by traveling on DNR roads (Figure 7, Trails and Roads). The Ninemile Road ends at the Loomis NRCA boundary north of Cold Creek…

7. Snowmobile trails in the Loomis NRCA are un-groomed, discovery trails and receive a low level of use compared to other snowmobile trails in the Loomis State Forest. In general, trails in the Loomis NRCA are narrow with tight turns, cover difficult terrain through dense forest and are not conducive to high speeds. Management actions, including trail maintenance, should maintain these trail characteristics.

8.

Wheeled Motorized Vehicles	Prohibited in all areas except for Thunder Mountain Road and Lone Frank Road. Additional exceptions include agency use, fire suppression, permit range management or written permission from DNR

9. Wildfire Rehabilitation

Following a wildfire, the burned area should be allowed to regenerate without human intervention. Specific restoration activities may be needed to restore areas disturbed by fire suppression activities. Post-fire revegetation will not be undertaken unless natural revegetation is impeded or slowed to such an extent that the ecological features or processes in the area will be negatively impacted. Restoration efforts will be designed based on consultation with Natural Areas Ecologists. Burned areas may need protection from livestock until a restoration plan is in place.

10. Blazing – Blaze marks are located on two sides of a tree and are made by removing a patch of bark leaving a scar that is fairly uniform in appearance. These marks are usually visible from one to the other and denote the location of the trail. Less severe methods such as a dot of paint or orange metal diamond markers(in response to comment # 29) could also be used to mark trails. . These marks need to be placed high enough so that the snow pack will not cover them in the winter. An inventory and site plan for marking trails and installing signs is a high priority. Trails will be marked by DNR staff or volunteers with written approval from NE Region or Natural Areas Staff.

11. **Trail Standards** - The following three trail types will be used to delineate trails in the Loomis NRCA. See figures 7 and 8.

Type – A – All Authorized Use Trail, All Season
Maximum Clearing Width: 8 feet (except roads 12 feet)
Maximum Clearing Height 10 feet
Marking Guidelines: Signage and Blazes

Structure Standards:	Water Crossing, Trail Drainage and Hardening, Signage, Mileage Markers, Blazes
Users:	Cattle, Horses, Hikers, Snowmobiles

Type – S – Summer Use Only Trail

Maximum Clearing Width:	Varies 3-8 feet
Maximum Clearing Height	10 feet
Marking Guidelines:	Signage and Clear Path Blazing
Structure Standards:	Water Crossing, Trail Drainage and Hardening
Users:	Cattle, Horses, Hikers

Type – W – Winter Use Only

Maximum Width:	Approximately 46 inches
Marking Guidelines:	Blazing
Structure Standards:	No Structures, No Trail Signs
Users:	Snowmobiles, Snowshoe Hikers and Cross-country Skiers

[ ] Withdrawn. This threshold determination has been withdrawn due to the following:

[ ] Delayed. A final threshold determination has been delayed due to the following:

Summary of Comments and Responses (if applicable):
available at http://www.wa.gov/dnr
Omak, Okanogan, Tonasket and Oroville Public Libraries.

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Date: 4-10-03 Signature: John X Viada